

status

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 1987



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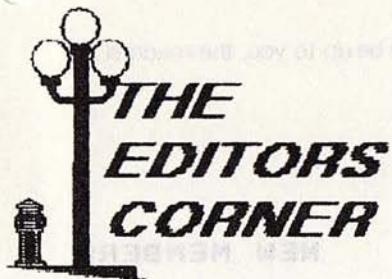
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FULL PAGE
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As promised, the original copy of this article was formatted using a 1040 ST and Publishing Partner, with the output being sent to an Epson FX85 dot matrix printer. Quadruple pass printing makes for near typeset quality copy but at the expense of speed. A single printed page can take 8 to 15 minutes to print, depending on page length, graphics content, printer, etc. I refuse to use the rest of this column for a review of this software 'cause there has been at least one such review in every Atari magazine for the last six months.... So, on to more importants.

; you read through this issue, you notice that NONE of the articles ; written by STATUS members. You have probably also noticed that our meeting attendance has dropped off drastically. As President and Editor, these two areas are of great concern to me. I am in a unique position, wearing two hats, so to speak, and it gives me twice the opportunity to get our club back on track and up to speed.

Lets discuss the two issues, membership and attendance first. Our Tidewater area is one that's made up of transient people for the most part. Therefore we get new members who are only here for a short while and then they are gone. This accounts for some of the attendance dropoff. Others may have joined specifically to find out how to get XYZ printer to do subscript and underline with 'Uncle Billi Bob's Dandy

Word Processor', and get a few of the PD disks out of the library..then they're outta here....these account for a few more. A few others just plain lose interest, the only exciting thing about using computers is NEW software and hardware. New 8bit software of recent has been scarce to say the least, the best of which are some Public Domain printer programs. However; there is some very exiting new hardware on the horizon though, drives, computers, game systems, and modems, which will even stir the interest of ex 8bit users. And so goes a few more! We have just endured a hot and sticky summer, which, will tend to get your mind off just about anything ~~septin~~ Air Condition, the swimmin pool, or a relaxing weekend at the seashore or better yet in the mountains. I am positive that most of our non attending members fall into the last category, and secondly that now that cooler weather is on the way and school has started, we will start to fill our meeting hall again.

The STATUS Newsletter has been printed for quite sometime now. It has evolved from a top stapled, three page zerox, to its present form through at least three editors of my knowledge.... From homespun speculation topics to the level of todays technology by the use of high speed modems and electronic newsletters online just waiting to be downloaded and put into print. This evolution has brought with it an enormous price tag. We have experienced a severe dropoff of member generated articles, and, I realize as membership and attendance decline, so do the newsletter contributions.

This is the third issue I have enjoyed (honest!) in publishing. Upon taking over this job, I set some goals for myself and the content of this

newsletter that I hoped to achieve. I envisioned issues filled with STATUS member generated articles, monthly columns from the officers, the latest hot disk info from the librarian, rumors from GENIE and Compuserve and best download of the week from the Sysop, and paid advertisements from local businesses not necessarily computer oriented.

We need the support of the membership if we are to continue down this road. You could have already read every one of the articles in this issue, with the exception of this editorial, by just picking up some of the material received by our Newsletter Exchange. Does it really make sense to pay considerable amounts to reprint these articles? Perhaps the answer is to suspend publication of the newsletter and to put that expense money into equipment and software for the club, that new ST we want, or a second BBS. Maybe we should revise our printing schedule to bimonthly or even quarterly.

Our club does not hold a unique position here. The other clubs newsletters are reflecting the same questions and similar problems. Please come to the next meeting with your ideas and solutions and present them to the club. I am confident that we can come to an agreeable, workable solution. I do feel that the programs we have recently started and the formal beginning of the ST Sig are steps in the right direction.

Off the soap box now!....I did manage to find some interesting stuff for this issue. Theres a couple of software reviews, a new product review, and a humorous piece from Frank Walters from ZMAG ST. Next(???) issue will have a report on hooking 5.25 inch drives to an ST and moving of Synfile+ files to DBMan on the ST, and the rest

will be up to you, the readers!

NEW MEMBERS

STATUS would like to welcome the following new or returning members:

Vincent Donnally - Chesapeake
Stuart McCausland - Va. Beach
John Waitekus - Va. Beach
Ken Booher - Norfolk
Henry Adams Jr. - Va. Beach
Ned Lowery - Va. Beach

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendar for the following computer shows and Atari Fairs.

Computer Exhibition - October 3,4 - Va. Beach Pavillion

Boston Atarifest -October 10,11 - Worcester Centrum - Worcester Mass.

Atarifest '87 - October 24,25 - Fairfax High School - Fairfax, Va.

SOFTWARE REVIEW

221B Baker Street
reviewed by Don Szarowski
Printed from the CDACE Electronic Edition Newsletter

"Come, Watson, come...the game is afoot!" And so, with these familiar words, our adventure through the Victorian streets of London begins.

Prior to actual play, it is necessary to set up the game by selecting your character, getting your clue code and starting a case. There are 30 cases on the back of the disk, and a supplemental case disk available. Up to 4 players or teams may compete as Sherlock Holmes, Dr. Watson, Irene Adler or Inspector Lestrade. The case book contains the vital background information for each abominable city, as well as the information needed by Scotland Yard to consider the case solved.

You may move about the streets of London by using either your joystick or the keyboard to roll the die and move. An overhead 3-D view of the city lets you keep track of your movements, and a full view of the city is also available for planning your movements in relation to your opponents. The game begins and ends at 221B Baker St., but in between, you must travel the streets and gather clues from the various shops and buildings. You must also get a badge from Scotland Yard before you can solve the case. Doors can be locked, secret passages used and carriages ridden in

to save precious time. The real secret, of course, is to use your razor sharp mind to deduce the solution from a minimum number of clues. With the solution in hand, you return to 221B Baker St., announce the solution and inform Dr. Watson that it was elementary. Well, I was able to do that the first time. Now my kids have gotten smarter and break my coded clues too.

The graphics are very well done, and each character has his/her own distinct trait during movement; for example, Sherlock puffs smoke as he walks. The speech synthesis leaves a bit to be desired, but fortunately it is used sparingly and is just window dressing.

Player movement is a bit slow because of all the redrawing of the characters and map, but not terribly annoying. Disk accesses seem to have been kept to a minimum, which is nice since it reduces disk swapping. So far, the playing time seems to be 30-45 minutes per case.

This is a very enjoyable game to play and both my children (age 13 & 16) and I would recommend it.

221B Baker Street Datasoft \$18.95

CUSTOMIZING AUTORUN.SYS

By: Ron Hamilton
Reprinted from ICCC, Maitoon Ill.
Newsletter
Retyped for STATUS by VKW

Part of the "boot" process with the Atari DOS 2.0 and 2.5 is an attempt to locate, load, and execute a file named "AUTORUN.SYS". This can be any machine language object code file with an appended execution address.

DOS.SYS contains the specified file in ATASCII form at address \$1700 to \$1719 (5900-5919). The default file is "D1:AUTORUN.SYS". You can see this with the following basic code:

```
10 FOR I=5900 TO 5919:PRINT CHR$(PEEK(I));NEXT I
```

You can, of course, POKE anything that you like into these addresses and add a custom touch to your DOS. It is even conceivable to make your DOS look for something like "D2:MYFILE.OBJ", which would make your DOS totally useless on a one drive system. My personal Dos is modified only slightly to look for "D1:A???????.SYS"; the wild cards take up the same memory space as the default and will also accept the stock file name.

The utility is the fact that I can use any seven characters between the "A" and the ".SYS" to describe myfile and have some idea what the particular AUTORUN.SYS does. I have "ARUNMENU.SYS" or "AGCOLON.SYS", ETC. You may have others that would make a directory listing much more informative. Here is how to do it:

```
10 DIM F$(14):F$="D1:A???????.SYS"
20 FOR I=1 TO 14
```

```
30 POKE 5899+I,ASC(F$(I,1))
40 NEXT I
50 OPEN #1,8,0,"D:DOS.SYS"
60 END
```

The OPEN command in line 50 will write DOS.SYS file to a disk in drive 1, so you do not have to go to DUP.SYS and manually write the DOS file with the option "H". Either way, you must write the new DOS.SYS to the disk before you can boot your system with it.

The END in line 60 forces Basic to close all open I/OCB's (Input Output Control Blocks). Obviously, you can define F\$ to be whatever you like in line 10. But give some careful thought before you go POKEing around.

ATARI CHALLENGE

By Bill Silverman

Printed from The CDACE Newsletter
Electronic Edition

I admit it, I'm an Atari addict. When everybody was buying Apples in the early 80's I bought a 32K Atari 800. When everybody was buying Commodores in the mid 80's I bought an 800XL. When the 130XE was introduced I got one of them too! Then came the ST. This time, I said to myself, I'm gonna wait. Let them show me that this one is going to be great.

So, I waited as long as I could and I now have a 1040ST. Can it do

things better than my old Atari's? Yes definately! Is it as well developed as the 130XE or 800XL? Most definately not! Well friends this is most assuredly a paradox. A bigger better machine with enough memory and speed to outrun everybody in town! Some of the software is the leading edge of the next generation of software - particularly the graphics software. The ST and Publishing Partner have opened up new doors to what can be done at home in desktop publishing at a bargain price!

The product is still not available - vaporware may be standard practice in the industry, but, if you can advertise it please market it!

The software to interface with the hardware is miserable. Don't tell me to 'any word processor that prints .I text files to disk' to write ter drivers or assign.sys files. Give us programs that do the work!

The same thing goes for font editors. When somebody makes a font editor the equal of INSTANT EDIT that Sheldon Leemon wrote for the Atari 800 then we'll be in business. Don't tell me how many fonts the computer needs for the screen and printer. Again, give us programs that do the work!

Give us load and go software! An autorun.sys is a must for the modern computer and that includes the ST.

Lastly, give us all a sense of hope. We have exactly one committed

Atari retail store in the Capital District. The people who own and run the store love the machine but are considering dropping the Atari line for lack of product and support.

What do they want: #1, the IBM emulator. #2, the IBM Clone. #3, support for the product they do have (how do you think a dealer feels when 1040's sit unsold while customers wait for a MEGA ST which the dealer can't get?)

So come on Atari, we're all out here rooting for ya, we're supporting you!

DO IT NOW

ANTIC'S CRYSTAL FOR THE ATARI ST

By Paul J. Kuehn

Reprinted from the March 1987 MIL ATARI Newsletter. Retyped for STATUS by RML.

Picture this: You are busily working with a program when you realize that you had better save your work because you've already got quite a bit of time invested in it. But when you try to save it, an alert box flashes on the screen telling you that your disk is full! To make matters worse, you remember that you haven't yet formatted any of the new disks that you just bought and the program you are in won't let you format a disk without first exiting, and that will destroy all the work you have done so far!

Sound familiar? Well if you have Antic Software's Crystal loaded as a desk accessory, problems like this are a thing of the past. Not only will Crystal allow you to format a new disk, it gives you all of your other GEM desktop file management functions as well. Additionally, it brings you some new abilities that Digital Research, Inc. left out of GEM. And since Crystal is a Desk Accessory all of this is available to you without ever leaving your favorite GEM program.

When Crystal is selected from the drop down Desk menu, it produces a large window on the screen. The top row of this window contains icons titled All, None, Format, Trash, Copy, Move, Print, Label, Make (folder), Erase (folder). Three of these, Format, Trash, and Copy perform normal desktop functions, and are self-explanatory. The others may require some description.

First to perform any function, you first click the mouse cursor on one or more of the filenames displayed in the lower part of the window. If you wish to select all of the files on the disk (or directory) you can simply click on the ALL icon. Similarly, to deselect all files, click on the NONE icon. A check mark will appear in front of any selected files. Now you click on one of the icons to carry out the desired action.

But wait, there's more! Suppose you wish to select a group of files, for example, to print out all the files

ending with a .DOC extender. In the middle of the window, you see the line that says, "Source Drive = A:". Double clicking to the right of this will produce a dialog box titled "Global Selection". Here you can define either a given extender, or all files that begin with the same letters, regardless of their extender. For example, you could select all files that start with 1STWORD. You can also use this box to globally rename a group of files; for example, from .DOC to .TXT.

Back in the main window again, if you wish to find out how much free space is left on the disk, simply click on the line that reads "Free Space-Bytes". This information can be very handy, because some programs, such as CAD-3D, do not produce any alert boxes if you try to save to a full disk, the programs simply crash! This feature allows you to check a questionable disk in advance.

Crystal also allows you to Move files, something that the GEM desktop does not permit. Normally, if you wish to move a file from within a folder to the root directory of a disk you have to go through a rather elaborate procedure. First you must open a second window, so that now you have one window showing the folder contents, and another showing the root directory. You then copy the file from one window to the other. But now you have two copies of it, and must delete the first by dragging it to the trash can. Whew! Crystal's Move command provides a much more elegant solution. Files can be

moved into and out of folders, or to other drives. If you are moving files to or from a folder on the same disk, the program simply renames the file. This means that if your disk is full, you can still carry out this option because the program does not need room to make a duplicate. This feature makes it easy to organize your files into folders even after they have been created.

Selecting the Print icon allows you to print any file to the screen or the printer, and also allows you to select either ASCII characters only, or all codes. If you are sending the output to the printer, you can also specify headers, footers, line width to print, and whether or not to create page numbers. (These parameters can also be specified as default values by running a program that creates a configuration file which Crystal reads at boot up. This installation program is included on the disk with Crystal.)

The Label icon permits you to print disk directories, either to labels or to plain paper. Here you can specify printer codes to be sent to the printer to control line and character spacing so that the information can be printed tighter, thereby enabling you to fit it all on the disk label. You can also specify titles of the label.

This feature does have at least one quirk, however. It cannot see into folders. This means that you must first print out the root directory, then open

each folder in turn to print out their respective directories! In my opinion this could be improved.

Like any program, Crystal is not without its bugs. One problem I have encountered is that the Erase Folder option frequently will not work. This is not a serious flaw, however since it is rarely necessary to accomplish this from within a program you can always wait until you get back to the desktop. Also, as with any desk accessory, do not try to access Drive B if you only have a single drive system. Due to a bug in GEM, the system may crash if GEM tries to produce an alert box while the accessory is running. This can take the form of a "time bomb" since it may not actually crash until later on.

All in all, I find Crystal to be a very useful accessory, well worth the 30K of memory that it occupies. It can be especially useful to those of us who use ramdisks. While ramdisks are great for their speed, a ramdisk is not the most secure place to store a file you are working with. Crystal allows you to periodically copy your working files to a floppy disk without having to return to the desktop. This can be a real lifesaver in the event of a system crash. At only \$24.95, I consider Crystal to be a real bargain.

CRYSTAL
Antic Software Catalog
\$24.95
Description: Multi-function Desk

Accessory

Hardware Requirements: Atari 520ST or 1040ST

Memory Requirements: 30K

Features: Formats disks, inspect disk directory, copy files, move files, delete files, print files, print disk directories, make folders, delete folders.

A Few Minutes With Randy Mooney

By: Frank Walters, excerpted from ZMAG-ST
Retyped for Status by your Editor

Did'ja ever notice.....those bulletin boards that go wee-wah...wee-wah...wee-wah.. when you connect? That really annoys me. I wish all modems went weeeeeeh like mine. Half the time they don't even connect anyway.

Did'ja ever notice...those bulletin boards that don't do anything when you connect? They make you hit return a bunch of times before anything happens. Thats a pain in the neck. Nobody answers a telephone that way, they always say "hello" or something like that. Why don't all bulletin boards say something like "hello" when they connect, and not make you hit a bunch of keys before they say something? It doesn't seem polite to me.

...Ya know what really bothers me? Did'ja ever see those messages that you

try to read and at the end of the message there are about 33 carriage returns and the whole thing scrolls off the screen before you can read it? I think there ought to be a law or something that everybody who writes messages would have to read their own message and if they don't understand it then they would have to delete it.

...Did'ja ever see----those silly twirling cursors on some bulletin boards? Did'ja ever capture for a long time and see how much extra garbage goes into the buffer just from those silly twirling cursors? Even worse, did'ja ever try printing them? Twirling cursors really bug me.

Did'ja ever notice----those cutesy menus that give you no idea what anything is? I mean, why can't all bulletin boards use "G" for Goodbye? I've seen Off, Quit, Land, Terminate, and even Bye. Why does every r 'o complain about dropped carrier and make it so hard to log off? There (to be a law that certain commands are sacred and can't be touched: Download, Upload, Time, Messages, and Goodbye!

Did'ja ever notice---those people who write long messages that are continued on the next message? Did'ja ever notice after reading all those words that you have no idea what they were talking about? I never read any messages that are continued anymore. People who write those messages don't have anything important to say, they just like to see their words on the screen or maybe just like the typing practice.

Did'ja ever download....a big long file from a long distance board and the

file didn't run? I like to have my friends call the long distance boards and download the long files and then give them to me only if they work. I wish I had more friends. I wish I could erase those files from the Sysops disk so other people wouldn't have the same problem.

Doesn't it bother you...that some bulletin boards change the filenames so you don't recognize the download list and you download all the same files as last week but with different names? Maybe the Sysop does that 'cause nobody uploads and it makes everybody think he has a lot of files. I always wondered about that. Maybe somebody uploads them that way so the Sysop will think he is getting something new and lets the caller have "blackbeard privileges" or something.

... "Handles" are a pain in the v. I never could think of a good file and am embarrassed whenever I on a new bulletin board and the last question is "what is your Real Name?" I never know what to say because I already used my real name. Should I make up a real name different from the one I used at the beginning? One board I logged on asked for my real name first. I thought that would be easy so when it asked for my "handle" I just answered: NONE. It kept asking: "NONE, what is your command?" Then when I logged off, it said, "thank you for calling, NONE. I felt real foolish. I usually don't call back. I never could leave E-mail on those boards because I never could figure out who to send the mail to. Maybe I could find some people more like me by leaving E-mail for

"NONE".

... Did'ja ever notice--- the Sysops that complain the most about callers disconnecting are the ones that have boards that disconnect from you? I fill out a long questionnaire and then while I am trying to find out where everything is located, I see a message that says "Time expired, disconnecting" and it hangs up. Then the next time I call back I have a nasty note from the Sysop that says I let my time run out. That really bugs me. I didn't set the time limit, he did. Why is he mad at me?

Thats all the time I have for now. Did'ja ever notice that you never seem to have enough time for?

TIME EXPIRED, DISCONNECTING

THE PRESIDENTS BIT

Well guys, the summer is just about over, and none too soon as far as I'm concerned. Those days of 95 degrees and 90% humidity won't be missed at all. And its back to the books for many of our youngfolk and a reminder to us adults to be mindful of their presence on the bus stops and to adjust our driving accordingly.

This is supposed to be the month that the new Atari hardware is to be distributed. Their announcements did say September but failed to say which year. Atari has decided that the 'game machine' is not such a bad image after all. They plan to market a 64k game machine to be in direct competition with Nintendo and Sega. It will come with Flight Simulator on cart and a

light gun. Best of all, there will be a new disk drive available to replace the discontinued 1050, making the game machine easily upgradable to full computer capability. The new drive, and new ADOS from OSS, is about three times faster than the 1050 and will recognize all densities. It is smaller in size and is XE grey. ADOS will reportedly work on all previous 8bit machines. Atari hopes this new "game machine" will encourage software developers to write new games and other software for the 8bits. With a new drive, new DDS, 90 column word processing and a 1200 baud modem, who says the 8bits are dead?

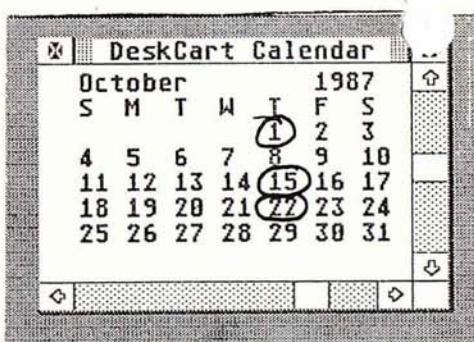
We will have to bury PLATO for the second time. Atari's educational network access cartridge is dead. A highly overpriced cartridge and user fees have kept this service from ever really getting up to speed...Owners and dealers are upset over the loss of investment. Atari has said it will replace the cart with another of your choice. Contact customer service for the details regarding replacement.

I would like to thank Marshall Rhodes, a new member, for his donation of an 800 XL to Status. We will use it in a special new member/user Sig headed up by our vice president, Stan (Nip) Harrison.

At our last meeting we officially kicked off several new projects. An ST SIG was formed and will be under the leadership of Doug Boynton, and his assistant Rich Thieman.... A raffle was held with the proceeds going into a

fund to purchase an ST for the club. The raffle was won by Bob Clendening. Also, several new PD software disks have been ordered for our club library from various clubs around the country. These will be featured as disks of the month at future meetings. Thanks to Dick Litchfield for the demo of Airball ST.

A couple of months ago I attended a organizational meeting of several ST owners desiring to start a new ST user group. I would like to make public at this time my invitation to you and to any other Atari owners to attend our meetings and to join STATUS. We have a lot to offer. We would like you to become an active part of our club and participate in our newly formed special interest groups. We look forward to seeing you again.



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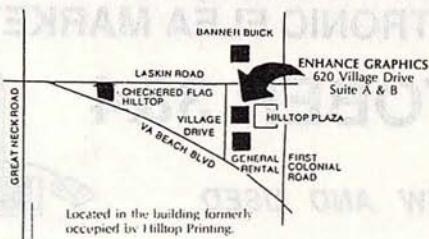
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Please address all Newsletter correspondence to:

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Newsletter Exchange
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Meetings: STATUS meetings are held on the first and third Thursdays of the month at the 7-UP Bottling Company, 5700 Ward Avenue, in Virginia Beach at 7:30 p.m. All interested parties are welcome to attend.

Newsletter Articles:

Submitted articles are preferred as disk text files, but will be greatly accepted as hard copy (including handwriting) if you do not have a disk drive. If you have a modem, you can upload your articles to the Editor by calling the STATUS BBS at 468-1096. Articles may be submitted at any time, but will probably not make that month's Newsletter if submitted less than one week prior to the first meeting of the month.

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